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REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

PHILADELPHIA:

BARRETT AND JONES, PRINTERS,

No. 33 Carter's Alley.

1844.

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ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

SILENCE, ye storms! nor softest zephyrs blow,
To dissipate the gloom which reigns below :
But deepest shades of night, your darkest horror shed,
To aid my pensive muse, to mourn the silent dead.

But chiefly thou, great healer of mankind,
Whose only balm can ease the troubled mind;
Support my sinking head, and all my pains control,
While I rehearse aloud, the sorrows of my soul.

The man I lov'd, the man by thousands priz'd;
By angels honor'd; but by fools despised;
Hath closed his eyes in death! and left me here in pain,
To sigh, and mourn, and weep, while life and love remain.

O, tale of woe! expand thy ebon wings,
And fly to palaces, to courts and kings;
Then swiftly mount aloft, and sound from shore to shore,
Thy friend, thy father's fled, thy Wesley is no more!

The tale is gone! it mourns along the plain;
The uplands sadden, and the hills complain!
The woods, and shady groves, assume a darker shade,
When sighs, and sadness reign in every pensive glade.

As on the hills the watchful shepherd stands,
 He hears the tale below, and lifts his hands;
 Then sighs, and smites his breast, and drowns his path
 with tears,
 And to his lonely cot, the mournful tidings bears!

The hardy hind, who turns his furrows o'er,
 Goes on and weeps, 'till he can weep no more!
 Then quits his callous-hold, and leaves his team behind,
 While he in rustic strains, relieves his troubled mind.

The hoary sire, with cares and years opprest,
 Leans on his staff, and smites his aged breast;
 Then homeward bends his way, and strives to mend his
 pace,

To spread the mournful tale, through all his natal place.

The virgin-train who grace the rural throng,
 Nor lead the village-dance, nor aid the song;
 Nor bloom like Sharon's rose, nor hail the welcome
 spring,

But with loud cries and woes make all their hamlets ring.

The youthful swains are now no longer seen,
 To play their gambols o'er the neighb'ring green;
 Their mirth is sadly changed to solitary woe,
 While through the lonely glades and villages they go!

Nor rural nymphs, nor rustic swains alone;
 But all our towns, and streets, partake our moan:
 They swell our deepest groans, and echo back our cries,
 And mix their tears with ours, and urge them through
 the skies.

E'en cits and gay coquets, unused to weep,
 Show signs of sorrow as they crowd the street:

Then turn, and change their course, and throng the
 neighb'ring road,*
 To view his last remains, in his forlorn abode.

They see his last remains, and bless the sight,
 And own the things he taught must needs be right :
 Then bow, and inly pray, they may his steps pursue,
 And vow, while life remains, to keep his end in view.

The men of rank and fame, their loss deplore,
 And wish the season back, which comes no more :
 Could we, alas! they cry, his shining path pursue,
 We should be great indeed! and bless'd and happy too.

Fair science now puts on her sad attire,
 And from the studious groves, her sons retire,
 They kiss his learned toil, and bow their pensive head,
 And mourn such wisdom, lost among the common dead.

Nor foes, (for foes he had) can now forbear
 To loath their own, while they his deeds declare :
 For all the good he did, they now at least descry,
 And fain like him would live, and wish like him to die.

Nor envy now no more reluctant seems,
 To own the worth she in her heart esteems :
 But calls him great and good, and truly learn'd and
 wise,

And spreads his fame abroad, to all in earth and skies !

Pale indigence draws near, with all her train ;
 She looks, and looks again, but all in vain !
 Then weeps, and cries aloud, and all her grief relates,
 And spreads ten thousand tears around his sacred gates.

* This is literally true.

As home she goes, but goes without supplies,
 Where is the good man gone? the orphan cries:
 I know he's not at home, or we had better sped;
 But sure as he returns, we shall again be fed.

The mother hears! then tears her squalid hair!
 Looks wild! and raves! and yields to black despair!
 Then vends her mighti'st woe, in many a doleful cry!
 And bears her orphan off, to pine, and weep, and die!

With pensive ears he heard the aged moan,
 And saw their tears and mixt them with his own:
 Then stretch'd his lib'ral hand, and shar'd his frugal
 store,
 And gave them all he could, and wish'd to give them
 more.

The vagrant poor, suspected, and despised,
 Were oft reliev'd by him, and sometimes prized;
 And though the boon was small, he gave it with such
 grace,
 As spread confusion o'er their feign'd and harden'd face.

When he had nought, and could no longer give,
 He cry'd aloud, and *begg'd* the poor might live;
 Nor would he cease to beg, 'till he his suit obtain'd,
 Though niggards stopt their ears, and all his cries dis-
 dain'd.

But those of worth, who bear the sacred cross,
 Revere his labors, and lament the loss,
 Of one who taught and urg'd, like those renown'd of old,
 To share among the poor their hoards of useless gold.

But deeper woes distract my tortured mind,
 They come from ev'ry coast, with ev'ry wind:

His children mourn aloud, nor can they e'er refrain,
While ought of filial love, or gratitude remains.

Ah me! they cry, and is our father fled?
And is he number'd with the silent dead?
And is he gone at last, to that celestial shore,
And shall our wishful eyes behold him here no more!

O mighty woe! O loss beyond redress!
Kind heaven assist, while we our woes express!
Our drooping heads lift up, and loose our stam'ring
tongue,
While we proclaim abroad, what he for us hath done.

When wand'ring wide, and o'er the mountains spread,
Like sheep without a shepherd at their head;
He kindly sought us out, and in his arms embrac'd,
And banish'd all our griefs, and all our fears effac'd.

When dangers press'd, or foes appear'd in sight,
He stood between, and put them all to flight;
Then led us safely on, and show'd our feet the way,
To peace, and hope, and love, and everlasting day.

When grief assail'd, he heard our ev'ry moan,
Wept when we wept, and made our griefs his own:
Nor would he cease to grieve, while we of aught com-
plain'd;
But strove to bear us up, 'till we our joy regain'd.

In all our joys, he gladly bore a part,
And met our transports with a bounding heart:
Then look'd around on all, with smiles of softest grace,
And bless'd our happy lot, and kiss'd our blushing face.

When songs of heav'nly praise employed our tongues,
 He join'd with heart and voice, to aid our songs :
 To guide and guard our strains, he wav'd his hands on
 high,
 Lest one discordant note, pass'd uncorrected by.

If e'er our lukewarm souls grew cold and dead,
 And all his mild reproofs flew o'er our head :
 He chang'd his softer notes, and look'd with sterner brow,
 And fain would use the rod, but O! he knew not how.

When feuds and contests rose, to wound our peace,
 His prudence soon prevail'd, to make them cease ;
 He heard our sad complaints ! then look'd, and meekly
 smiled ;
 We blush'd, and then shook hands, and so were reconciled !

Beset on ev'ry side with worldly cares,
 He warn'd us night and day, with many tears,
 To shun the dang'rous road, where twice ten-thousand
 fell,
 Who barter'd grace for gold, and now lament in hell.

If young or old appear'd in costly dress,
 He blam'd us o'er and o'er for such excess :
 Be plain and neat, he cry'd, and frugal of your store,
 Nor dare to rob your God, by robbing of the poor.

Whene'er we stray'd, by sin or error led,
 He sought, and found us out, wherever fled ;
 Then kindly call'd us back, and spread his arms abroad,
 To help our weakness home, to happiness and God.

That we no more might stray, or lag behind,
 Our faithful shepherd bore us on his mind:
 He watch'd, and wept, and warn'd, when sin appear'd
 in view,
 Lest greater ills o'ertook, than all we ever knew.

Be wise, he cry'd, and shun the paths of sin;
 Be bold, be firm, nor let the foe break in:
 March on with cheerful feet, and sing your choicest song;
 Nor fear your labor lost, nor think your journey long.

While those who know you not, for forms contend,
 Be faith and hope your guide, and love your end:
 Let these direct your feet, and raise your heads on high,
 Where faith and hope shall cease, and love shall never
 die.

Yet while you here remain, your load to bear,
 Let works of right'ousness your faith declare:
 Be just and kind to those who all your good despise,
 And show to all around, your sonship in the skies.

But chiefly those who love the Saviour's name,
 Who prize his scandal, and enjoy his shame;
 To each of these extend your arms of love abroad,
 And serve and love them well, and only less than God.

And as you pass through Life's uneven way,
 Pray for your guides and without ceasing pray;
 Support our feeble hands, when to the mountain go,
 And thus reward our toil, and thus your kindness show.

O grant this only boon! 'tis all we crave,
 That we in helping you, ourselves may save:
 That we may faithful prove, and to the end endure,
 And wear the crown of right'ousness to conquest sure.

As life so soon is o'er, your time redeem,
 And give your hearts to God, and live to him :
 Then wait in patient hope, your summons to the skies,
 Where pain and grief are o'er, and death forever dies.

'Twas thus, our faithful guide his course pursued,
 Nor toil, nor danger shun'd, to do us good :
 But gladly bore the cross, that we the prize might gain,
 And one with him and God, through endless ages reign.

Nor was his toil and care to us confined,
 He daily sought the good of all mankind ;
 That they might seek and know, in this their gracious
 day,

The way to endless peace, and cast their sins away.

He wished that all might find their pardon seal'd,
 Their fears removed, and feel their conscience heal'd :
 That peace, and joy, and hope, might here their portion
 be,

And love and sweet delight to all eternity.

For this his cheerful feet pursued their way,
 Through winter's night, and summer's sultry day ;
 Through woods, and floods, he passed, and o'er the boist'-
 rous main ;

Nor e'er was known to shrink, or of his toil complain.

While o'er the mountain-tops he often went,
 He met the rapid storms with sweet content ;
 Then swiftly mov'd along the dark and doubtful track,
 And chid his coward steed, who fain would turn his
 back.*

* This is a well known fact.

He often rode, as through the land he past,
 Full thirty miles, before he broke his fast !
 Then added thirty more, before he stopt to dine !
 And ten or twenty more, before his preaching time !*

When worn with toil, and age, and sore disease,
 He rode an easier way, his friends to please :
 But neither friends, nor age, his wonted speed could stay ;
 For now, he often went HIS HUNDRED MILES A DAY.†

To live for God, while in this vale of tears,
 He rose at four o'clock, for three-score years !‡
 Then spent the livelong day in something great and good ;
 Nor loung'd one hour away, nor ever ling'ring stood !

When he in youthful days his course begun,
 And rose resplendant, like the rising sun !
 Both earth and hell pursued, and wag'd a dreadful fight,
 To blast the opening bloom, and quench the kindling
 light.

For this the rich and great their influ'nce spread,
 And sleeping shepherds rais'd their drowsy head :
 While formal saints, exclaim'd, where'er he shew'd his
 face,
 And scandal croak'd around, her false and foul disgrace !

By these the human-herds were gather'd round,
 Who fought with sticks and stones, or ought they found ;
 Who tore his raiment off, and bruis'd his sacred head !§
 Nor could they scarce refrain, before they thought him
 dead !

* Strictly true. † This is a real fact. ‡ This is a real fact. § This is another undoubted fact.

Through tumults, toils, and strife, he urg'd his way,
 And dared the ills of life his feet to stay!
 The ills he saw, and felt, but rais'd his bosom high'r,
 And kinder pity gave, and more intense desire.

As truth is great, and will in time prevail,
 His foes fell off, and would no more assail :
 But turn'd their hate to love, and own'd the truth he
 taught,
 And bless'd the happy day which such glad tidings
 brought.

Now thousands turn'd, and twice ten thousand more,
 And mourn'd the hated deeds they did before :
 Then half the wond'ring world their gratitude exprest,
 And threw their arms abroad, and clasp'd him to their
 breast.

Yet still he onward went, with steady pace,
 As much unmov'd by smiles, as by disgrace ;
 Nor would he aught abate, though oft besought with
 tears !
 But kept one even pace, for more than three-score
 years !*

That this is no romance, one instance hear,
 And may it rend in twain each sluggard's ear :
 His last day's-work, but one, he plann'd, and thought to
 ride,
 A hundred miles and eight! and preach and write be-
 side !†

* This is strictly, literally true. † This is a real fact.

To feed his flock he put forth all his might,
 And preached the word both morning, noon, and night :
 Nor did he ever cease, while we had time to hear ;
 But preach'd or someway taught, a thousand times a
 year!*

Besides the rest, which we assert as facts,
 He wrote, in all, above two hundred tracts!
 And yet, in ev'ry year, a thousand missives sent,
 Through this, and various isles, and ev'ry continent!†

'Twas thus his years, and days, and hours were spent ;
 'Twas thus he us'd the goods his master lent ;
 'Twas thus—we say no more, but this great truth re-
 hearse,
 He did what man could do, to bless the universe.

At last the mortal foe, his dart prepar'd ;
 We saw, and wept, and each his grief declar'd :
 Then try'd each fruitless, to shield his sacred head ;
 Nor would we cease to try, when all our hopes were
 fled !

But he unmov'd, beheld his end draw nigh,
 And met the coming-foe without a sigh ;
 Then rais'd his feeble voice, though with a falt'ring
 tongue,
 And spread his arms abroad, and thus divinely sung :

“ All glory to God in the sky,
 And peace upon earth be restor'd ;
 O Jesus exalted on high,
 Appear our omnipotent Lord !

* This is another fact. † Another fact.

Who meanly in Bethlehem born,
 Didst stoop to redeem a lost race :
 Once more to thy people return,
 And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

“ O would'st thou again be made known,
 Again in thy spirit descend ;
 And set up in each of thine own,
 A kingdom that never shall end.
 Thou only art able to bless,
 And make the glad nations obey ;
 And bid the dire enmity cease,
 And bow the whole world to thy sway.”

When he was quite derang'd, or slumb'ring laid,
 No wild or vagrant thought his tongue betray'd ;
 But what he said before, he said it now again,
 And still forgot his own, to ease his brothers' pain.

As those stood weeping by, who rais'd his head,
 And did, what could be done, around his bed ;
 He saw their toil, and care, and thank'd their great good
 will,
 But cry'd, “ 'Tis best of all that God is with us still.”

That “ God is with us” still, he thrice declar'd,
 And thrice look'd up, and saw his vast reward !
 Then cry'd, “ through Jesu's blood the holiest place I
 gain,”

And strove to raise his voice, and sung his fav'rite strain :

“ I'll praise my maker while I've breath,
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;

My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, or thought, or being last,
Or Immortality endures."

"Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God ; he made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train !
His truth for ever stands secure,
He saves th' opprest, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain."

His nights for ever fled, the morn appear'd,
Which brought the signs of woe we long had fear'd ;
He hail'd the happy day, and then triumphant cry'd,
"I'll praise!—I'll praise!—Farewell!"—then closed
his eyes and died !

O ruthless death ! how fixt thy stern decree ;
Since he must fall a sacrifice to thee !
Since him, we valued *most*, as BEST of all our race,
Could no exemption find, or gain a longer space.

O cheerless light ! O inauspicious day !
Which mock'd our fear, and bore our guide away ;
And left us wand'ring with thousand cares opprest,
Without his wonted aid, to ease our troubled breast.

The pensive dove, whene'er his mate is fled,
Coos round, and round, then droops his languid head ;
And shall not we complain, who feel a heav'er load !
We must ; we can't refrain, while in this dark abode.

As Isr'el mourn'd of old, his fav'rite gone ;
As Rachel mourn'd her fertile plains along ;
As Mary mourn'd and wept, beneath her Saviour's cross,
So we, with moans and tears, will now lament our loss.

But though we now lament, the day is nigh,
 When we shall meet again, above the sky ;
 And there our songs unite, and join the radiant throng,
 And bow before the throne, and bless the great three one !

Then let us still maintain the truth he taught,
 And faithful prove, in deed, and word, and thought ;
 The path he trod before, let us through life pursue,
 And help each other on, and keep the prize in view.

But chiefly we, who bear his sacred shame,
 Who feed his flock, and still revere his name ;
 Let us unite in one, and strive with mutual care,
 To help his children on, and all their burthens bear.

For this, let us like him, the world disdain ;
 For this like him rejoice in toil and pain ;
 Like him be bold for God ; like him our time redeem ;
 And strive, and watch, and pray ; and live and die like
 him.

FINIS.



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